854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("dallala") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "gelgal", may be extended to animal nurslings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "tatu segra" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "kaka". The 853 baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly exposed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover 854 the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laisses-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervening playful adolescence.

a. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It